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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 002033

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [YM](#) [DOMESTIC](#) [POLITICS](#)

SUBJECT: ISLAH ON RECENT RIOTING AND ECONOMIC REFORM

REF: SANAA 1976

Classified By: CDA Nabeel Khoury for Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. On July 23, in the wake of a recent rioting across the country (ref. A), CDA met with opposition Islah party leaders Abdelwahab al-Anisi, Mohammed Qahtan and Mohammed al-Saidi to urge peaceful and constructive opposition vice support for street demonstrations. Anisi, Islah Assistant SYG, assured CDA that his party would deal with the issue "sensitively," but condemned the ROYG for using excessive force to put down the civil unrest of the past week. End Summary.

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Islah Will React Responsibly  
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2 (C) Anisi responded to CDA's appeal to act carefully given current tensions that, "Islah will act responsibly," and promised that the party would deal with the economic reform situation "very carefully." Anisi told CDA that Islah would most likely raise the issue in Parliament as they "always" do, but that party leaders feel that restraint is being abused by the ROYG's accusations that Islah has nothing to offer. Nevertheless, Anisi agreed with CDA that there is a danger that a public protest would get out of hand in the current atmosphere.

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But The ROYG Did Not  
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¶3. (C) Anisi described the ROYG's reaction to the violence as "hasty," revealing that Islah plans to call for a "realistic investigation" into the events once things have settled down. Specifically, he condemned the security forces' use of real bullets and pointed to the Joint Meetings Party (JMP) opposition coalition's July 22 statement condemning "acts of sabotage" against private property as well as ROYG "acts of killing." He predicted that it would not take long for the ROYG to accuse the opposition of starting the riots.

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Reform Handled Badly  
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¶4. (C) On economic reforms, Anisi said that such a dramatic lifting of oil subsidies should have been accompanied by anti-corruption efforts. Islah, he added, had suggested lifting the subsidies in 1995 but only gradually and accompanied by a serious anti-corruption campaign. Anisi accused the ROYG of rejecting Islah's suggestions because it did not "fit in their agenda." Instead, Anisi accused the ROYG of using reforms to collect more revenue from the common people. "If the government implemented reform as we had suggested it would have all been done by now, and without violence," he said.

¶5. (C) CDA suggested reengaging in the opposition-ROYG dialogue to address Islah's corruption concerns. Specifically, CDA recommended that Islah could suggest specific programs on which to spend the government's savings from lifting the subsidies. Anisi replied that the ROYG's past actions indicate that they are not interested in "true" dialogue but that Islah would engage in good faith if the CDA could convince the other side to be more serious.

¶6. (C) CDA's meeting with Islah appears to have had one effect already. On July 25 Islah issued a statement, without the JMP, urging demonstrators to "express opinions through peaceful means and to avoid violence that would harm the homeland." The statement also demanded an investigation into the "cold blooded" murder of protesters as soon as possible. Khoury